

ACTON TOWN MANAGER'S ANNUAL ASSESSMENT – FY 2004

2/28
(11)

1. PERFORMANCE OF DUTY: The Manager's ability to manage and to get things done

a. Planning and Preparedness

1 - Got caught by the unexpected, appeared to be controlled by events. Set vague or unrealistic goals. Used unreasonable criteria to set priorities and deadlines. Rarely had plan of action. Failed to focus on relevant information.

2 - Mostly prepared.

3 - Consistently prepared. Set high but realistic goals. Used sound criteria to set priorities and deadlines. Used quality tools and processes to develop action plans. Identified key information. Kept Selectmen, stakeholders and citizens appropriately informed.

4 - Occasional outstanding preparation.

X 5 - Consistent exceptional preparation. Always looked beyond immediate events or problems. Skillfully balanced competing demands. Developed strategies with contingency plans. Assessed all aspects of problems, including underlying issues and impact.

Not observed.

b. Using Resources

1 - Concentrated on unproductive activities or often overlooked critical demands. Failed to use people productively. Did not follow up. Mismanaged information, money or time. Used ineffective tools or left subordinates without means to accomplish tasks. Employed wasteful methods.

2 - Mostly an effective manager.

3 - Effectively managed a variety of activities with available resources. Delegated, empowered and followed up. Skilled time manager, budgeted own and subordinates' time productively. Ensured subordinates had adequate tools, materials, time and direction. Cost conscious, sought ways to cut waste.

4 - Occasionally unusually skilled manager.

X 5 - Unusually skilled at bringing scarce resources to bear on the most critical of competing demands. Optimized productivity through effective delegation, empowerment, and follow-up control. Found ways to systematically reduce cost, eliminate waste, and improve efficiency.

Not observed.

c. Results/Effectiveness

1 - Routine tasks accomplished with difficulty. Results often late or of poor quality. Work had a negative impact on department or unit. Maintained the status quo despite opportunities to improve.

2 - Handles the routine jobs.

3 - Gets the job done in routine situations and in many unusual ones. Work was timely and of high quality; required the same of subordinates. Results had a positive impact on department or unit. Continuously improved services and organizational effectiveness.

X 4 - Often provided outstanding work.

5 - Maintained optimal balance among quality, quantity, and timeliness of work. Quality of own and subordinates work surpassed expectations. Results had a significant positive impact on Town. Established clearly effective systems of continuous improvement.

Not observed.

d. **Adaptability**

1 - Unable to gauge effectiveness of work or make adjustments when needed. Overlooked or screened out new information. Overreacted or responded slowly to change in direction or environment. Ineffective in ambiguous, complex or pressured situations.

2 - Generally effective.

3 - Receptive to change, new information and technology. Effectively used benchmarks to improve performance and service. Monitored progress and change course as required. Effectively dealt with pressure and ambiguity. Facilitated smooth transitions.

X 4 - Often skillful.

5 - Rapidly assess and adjusted to changing conditions, new information and technology. Very skilled at using and responding to measurement indicators. Championed organizational improvements. Effectively dealt with extremely complex situations. Turned pressure and ambiguity into constructive forces for change.

Not observed.

e. **Professional Competence**

1 - Questionable competence and credibility. Expertise lacking in key areas. Made little effort to grow professionally. Used knowledge as power against others or bluffed rather than acknowledging ignorance. Effectiveness reduced due to limited knowledge of own organizational role or Selectmen/citizen needs.

2 - Mostly competent and credible authority.

3 - Competent and credible authority on Town issues. Acquired and applied expertise to assigned duties. Showed professional growth through education, training and professional reading. Shared knowledge and information with others clearly and simply. Understood own organization role and Selectmen/citizen needs.

4 - Often superior performance.

X 5 - Superior expertise; advice and actions showed great breadth and depth of knowledge. Remarkable grasp of complex issues, concepts and situations. Rapidly developed professional growth beyond expectations. Vigorously conveyed knowledge directly resulting in increased staff productivity. Insightful knowledge of own role, Selectmen/citizen needs, and value of work.

Not observed.

Comments:

Don brings a depth of experience to his job that he applies to every project he undertakes. He is able to deliver superior advice and is thorough in his research and presentations to the board. He has a keen sense of what it takes to present an issue and will follow through with any request for additional information so the Board can make informed decisions. He is a leader by example in his professional approach to every issue that the entire town staff exhibits as well. He does not leave any stone unturned and is willing to learn from any and every source if it benefits the end product. One of Don's major accomplishments is he is able to orchestrate and call upon all

available resources and fully leverage those resources to solve a problem or tackle an issue. Possible improvement is to implement suggested email policy to route emails for response by particular department.

2. COMMUNICATION SKILLS: The Manager's ability to communicate in a positive and clear manner

a. Speaking and Listening

1 - Unable to effectively articulate ideas and facts; lacked preparation, confidence or logic. Uses inappropriate language or rambled. Nervous or distracting mannerisms detracted from message. Failed to listen carefully or was too argumentative.

2 - Generally effective in expressing ideas.

3 - Effectively expressed ideas and facts in individual and group situations; non-verbal actions consistent with spoken message. Communicated to people at all levels to ensure understanding. Listened carefully for intended message as well as spoken words.

4 - Often articulates well.

X 5 - Clearly articulated and promoted ideas; accomplished speaker in both formal and extemporaneous situations. Adept at presenting complex or sensitive issues. Active listener, remarkable ability to listen with open mind and identify key issues.

Not observed.

b. Writing

1 - Written material frequently unclear, verbose or poorly organized. Seldom proofread. Often submitted documents which was grammatically incorrect, tailored to wrong audience or delivered by an inappropriate medium.

2 - Writings generally satisfactory.

3 - Written material clear, concise and logically organized. Proofread conscientiously. Documents grammatically correct, tailored to audience, and delivered by an appropriate medium. Subordinates material reflected same high standards.

4 - Often persuasive.

X 5 - Clearly and persuasively expressed complex or controversial material directly contributing to stated objectives. Actively educated subordinates in effective writing.

Not observed.

Comments:

Don is a very good listener. He focuses on the heart of the matter in both his oral and written products. He is effective in getting his points across, but does not intimidate the listener. He is fair and presents a balanced view. His written product is incisive and effective and he excels at advocacy writing to state and federal agencies.

3. LEADERSHIP SKILLS: The Manager's ability to support, develop, direct and influence others' work

a. **Looking Out For Others**

1 - Seldom recognized or responded to needs or people, left outside resources untapped despite apparent need. Ignorance of individuals capabilities increased chance of failure. Seldom recognized or rewarded deserving subordinates.

2 - Generally supportive of others.

3 - Cared for people. Recognized and responded to their needs; referred to outside resources as appropriate. Considered individuals' capabilities to maximize opportunities for success. Consistently recognized and rewarded deserving subordinates.

4 - Occasionally outstanding leader.

X 5 - Always accessible. Enhanced overall quality of life. Actively contributed to achieving balance among Town requirements, professional and personal responsibilities. Strong advocate for subordinates; ensured appropriate and timely recognition, both formal and informal.

Not observed.

b. **Developing Others**

1 - Unreasonably restricted opportunities for professional growth, kept others in narrow roles and discouraged the level of risk-taking necessary for learning. Lack of timely feedback left subordinates guessing.

2 - Generally provided opportunities for subordinates to grow.

X 3 - Supported and provided opportunities for professional growth. Encouraged others to expand their roles, handle important tasks and learn by doing. Allowed the appropriate level of risk-taking necessary for learning and mission accomplishment. Provided timely praise and constructive feed back.

4 - Often effective in fostering professional development.

5 - Created challenging situations which optimized professional development and maximized opportunity for success. Guided, coached and encouraged others to reach new levels of performance. Adeptly counseled others; identified professional potential, strengths and areas for improvement.

Not observed.

c. **Directing Others**

1 - Showed difficulty in directing or influencing others. Low or unclear work standards reduced productivity. Failed to hold subordinates accountable for shoddy work or irresponsible actions. Unwilling to delegate authority to increase efficiency of task accomplishment.

2 - Often earned others' support and commitment.

X 3 - A leader who earned others' support and commitment. Set high work standards; clearly articulated job requirements, expectations and measurement criteria; held subordinates accountable. When appropriate, delegated authority to those directly responsible for the task.

4 - Occasionally inspirational leader.

5 - An inspirational leader who motivated others to achieve results not normally attainable. Won people over rather than imposing will. Clearly articulated vision; empowered subordinates to set goals and objectives to accomplish tasks.

Modified leadership styles to best meet changing situations.

Not observed.

d. **Teamwork**

1 - Used teams ineffectively or at wrong times. Conflicts mismanaged or often left unresolved, resulting in decreased team effectiveness. Excluded team members from vital information. Stifled group discussions or did not contribute productively. Stifled group discussions or did not contribute productively. Inhibited cross functional cooperation to the detriment of the Town.

2 - Often used teams effectively.

3 - Skillfully used teams to increase staff effectiveness, quality and service. Resolved or managed group conflict, enhanced cooperation, and involved team members in the decision process. Valued team participant. Effectively negotiated work across functional boundaries to enhance support of broader mutual goals.

4- Very skillful team builder.

X 5 - Insightful use of teams raised staff productivity beyond expectations. Inspired high level of esprit de corps, even in difficult situations. Major contributor to team effort. Established relationships and networks across a broad range of people and groups, raising accomplishments of mutual goals to a remarkable level.

Not observed.

e. **Workplace Climate**

1 - Intolerant of individual differences, exhibited discriminatory tendencies toward others. Tolerated or contributed to an uncomfortable or degrading environment. Failed to take responsibility for own words and actions and their impact on others.

2 - Generally sensitive of others, complies with anti-discrimination statutes and regulations.

3 - Sensitive to individual differences. Encouraged open communication and respect. Promoted an environment which values fairness, dignity, creativity, and diverse perspectives. Took responsibility for own words and actions and the impact on others.

4 - Very sensitive to individual differences.

5 - Excelled at creating an environment of fairness, candor, and respect among individuals of diverse backgrounds and positions. Optimized use of different perspectives and opinions.

Not observed.

Comments:

Don is a hands on manager whose only fault may be that he attempts to handle all aspects of every problem/issue that is presented. He relies on and maximizes the skeleton staff that he manages very well, but needs to allow greater leeway for their professional development. He clearly has the support of his staff and coaches them to achieve maximum efficiency with little to no resources. Don effectively uses the team based approach to achieve excellent results. It is important to foster still greater diversity in the town staff to reflect the growing diversity of the town demographics. One good example is the recent elevation of Eva Bowen to the town clerk's position.

4. **PERSONAL QUALITIES:** Selected qualities illustrating the Manager's character

a. **Initiative**

1 - Postponed needed action. Implemented or supported improvements only when directed to do so. Showed little interest in career development. Feasible improvements in methods or services went unexplored.

2 - Occasionally initiated improvements.

3 - Championed improvement through new ideas, methods, and practices; self-starter. Anticipated problems and took prompt action to avoid or resolve them. Sought opportunities for own career development. Pursued productivity gains and enhanced staff performance by applying new ideas and methods.

X 4 - Generally pro-active.

5 - Aggressively sought out additional responsibility. A self-learner. Made worthwhile ideas and practices work when others might have given up. Extremely innovative. Optimized use of new ideas and methods to improve work processes, decision-making, and service delivery.

Not observed.

b. **Judgment**

1 - Decisions often displaced poor analysis. Failed to make necessary decisions, or jumped to conclusions without considering facts, alternatives and impact. Did not effectively weigh risk, cost and time considerations.

2 - Occasionally displays good judgment.

3 - Demonstrated analytical thought and common sense in making decisions. Used facts, data and experience and consider the impact of alternatives. Weighed risk, cost and time considerations. Made sound decisions promptly with the best available information.

4 - Often exhibits superior judgment.

X 5 - Combined keen analytical thought and insight to make appropriate decisions. Focused on the key issues and most relevant information, even in complex situations. Did the right thing at the right time. Actions indicated awareness of impact and implications of decisions on others.

Not observed.

c. **Responsibility**

1 - Actions demonstrated questionable ethics or lack of commitment. Tolerated indifference or failed to hold subordinates accountable. Allowed organization to absorb personnel problems rather than confronting them as required. Tended not to speak up or get involved. Provided minimal support for decisions contrary to his own ideas.

2 - Generally supported Town/Selectmen policies.

3 - Held self and subordinates personally and professionally accountable. Spoke up when necessary, even when expressing unpopular positions. Supported all organizational policies and decisions which may have been counter to his own ideas. Committed to the successful achievement of Town goals.

4 - Often able to successfully implement unpopular decisions.

X 5 - Integrity and ethics beyond reproach. Always held self and subordinates to highest standards of personal and professional accountability. Did the right thing even when it was difficult. Succeeded in making even unpopular policies or decisions work. Actions demonstrated unwavering commitment to achievement of Town goals.

Not observed.

Comments:

Don is completely trustworthy, a reliable workhorse and a dedicated town servant. He confronts any difficult issue in a forthright manner without exerting any unnecessary influence to affect the outcome. He shows initiative in how he draws upon all applicable issues and resources to solve any issue. He keeps on top of pressing issues and briefs the chair in a timely and intelligent way. Don was adept at bringing me up to speed as a more recent resident of Acton without the experience of living in town for multiple decades. Don's judgment is beyond reproach and when he has any question, he always seeks legal counsel to help guide those difficult judgments.

General Comments:

Don adds immeasurable value to the town and ensures that the process and product are of the highest quality. Given the ever demanding and growing requirements of the job, Don meets his responsibilities with great results, even though each year the staff and all resources are stretched thinner and thinner. In addition to overseeing major capital improvements so that they are on time and within their budgets, Don helped to shepherd a very difficult budget that was buffeted by erratic and declining state aid, the Middlesex retirement systems unexpected increased costs and large growth of the town's health care costs. The town and staff helped to implement the first year of appropriations from the newly constituted Community Preservation Committee and worked cooperatively with our school systems to help balance the budget. He also helped oversee the implementation of a new joint software accounting system that should improve the town's efficiency and ability to handle the wealth of information necessary to a great many services the town provides. He has accomplished all this with great aplomb and without rancor. The town is well served by Don and his strong leadership skills.

Recommendation:

Contract extension

____ % raise

\$____ bonus

Submitted by: _____
Immediate Past Chairperson
Walter M. Foster

Date: _____

Approved (as modified) by the Board of Selectmen

Date: _____

Chairperson
F. Dore Hunter